

## Focusing on Food Labels

ERS researchers Mary Bohman and Elise Golan are paying a lot of attention to food labels these days.

Both Bohman and Golan have been with ERS for two years, and both are involved in a major new ERS inter-divisional project on the economic and policy dimensions of food labeling. The project touches on an issue of keen interest to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Clinton Administration, says ERS Assistant Administrator Nicole Ballenger:

"The thinking about the economics of labeling has underpinned a broader look at the potential roles for government in facilitating differentiation in the market for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and non-GMO commodities and products," says Ballenger.

Bohman's research focuses on the role of labels in facilitating international trade when consumers demand varies and when government policies mandate different production processes. "For example," explains Bohman, "if the European Union requires poultry producers to increase the physical space for live animals in production facilities, will trade continue with countries who have different animal welfare standards? Labeling would

allow consumers to make a choice between the two standards."

Golan, on the other hand, has focused more generally on the potential role of the government in food labeling, asking questions like: When should the government require labeling? When should it prohibit labeling? When should it set labeling standards?

"Whether or not the government has a role in labeling depends on a number of factors, including consumer preferences, the incentives of private firms to provide product information, and the ability of labels to inform consumers and influence consumption behavior," concludes Golan, who began looking at labeling issues during a recent detail at the President's Council of Economic Advisers.

This Fall, both Bohman and Golan have delivered briefings on labeling to a variety of groups including USDA cabinet and sub-cabinet officials, USDA's Biotechnology Coordinating Committee, and the ERS Commodity Roundtable. Also, Golan is co-authoring a "white paper" on labeling for Secretary Glickman and the National Economic Council, and she and ERS' Fred Kuchler will deliver a paper on labeling at the Global Food Trade and

Consumer Demand for Quality Symposium in Montreal in June 2000.

Looking ahead, Bohman wants to explore further how labeling can help international markets function more smoothly. Golan wants to examine the effect of labels on consumer behavior and product differentiation.

Bohman is chief of Market and Trade Economics Division's (MTED) Europe/Africa/Middle East Branch. Golan works in the Food and Rural Economics Division's (FRED) Food Assistance and Rural Economy Branch. Other ERS staffers involved in the labeling project are Steve Crutchfield (FRED), Peggy Caswell (Resource Economics Division), Fred Kuchler (FRED), and Lorrie Mitchell (MTED). ■

## ERS Out in Front on Future Trade Talks

Agricultural trade, as with so many things, is further globalized every day. The Uruguay Round (1986-94) was a watershed for trade liberalization, and ERS has kept pace recently with coordinated research on the ripple effects of that round's commitments and, more specifically, the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in agricultural trade. This project, which spans ERS and enlists both university economists and worldwide institutions, has gathered steam as a new round of multilateral trade negotiations beckons, beginning with the Seattle Ministerial Conference in late November.

ERS output in 1998 focused on how Uruguay Round commitments have influenced the conduct of agricultural trade and trade policy. This ground-

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Elise Golan and Mary Bohman checking food labels



# ERS Allocated \$65.4 Million in Fiscal Year 2000 Budget

For the third straight year, Congress appropriated ERS funds at a level well above the average of the previous decade. For FY 2000, ERS was allocated \$65.4 million, about \$12 million over the \$53 million average of the 1987-to-1997 period.

In FY 1999, ERS received \$65.8 million. The approximately \$12-million increase in the past three budgets is mainly for extramural research and evaluation of USDA food assistance programs, including food stamps and school lunches, through the Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program.

The overall ERS research program is largely determined by the policy program priorities of USDA. As Department spending on food assistance programs has grown, ERS has increasingly devoted research capacity to understanding the dynamics of program participation and the well-being of lower income consumers. The FY 1999 and 2000 appropriations specifically for this purpose enhance the existing ERS activity without requiring the withdrawal of resources

from other program areas in rural development, natural resources, and markets and trade.

The ERS budget was significantly reduced 6 years ago when the agency experienced about a 5-percent cut, which accelerated the trend of reducing the size of the agency's staff. Over the last 10 years, ERS staffing levels have fallen from about 800 to 533.

Today, ERS has established a productive balance between "labor" and "capital;" that is, between spending on its payroll versus spending for information technology, data, travel, and the like. To maintain this "labor-capital ratio," ERS will continue to set staffing levels conservatively, essentially at or just below the rate of attrition, or roughly 12 to 18 new professional hires annually.

A key element in the strategy for managing the agency budget in the future is to maintain or increase the funds available to support extramural research (mainly at universities), a capability the agency must have as a means of complementing its own staff resources. ■

## ERS Retains \$453,000 To Research Benefits of Food Safety

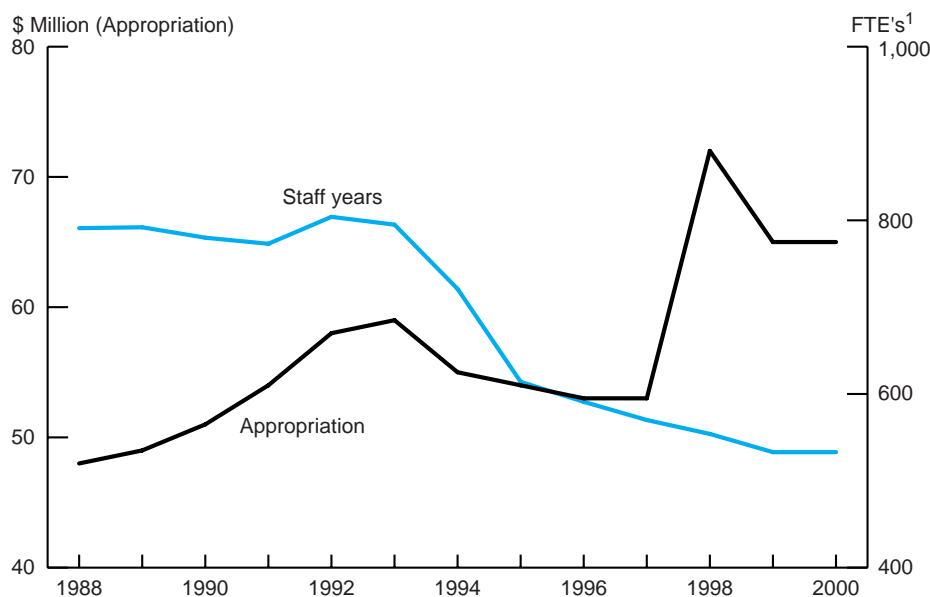
The ERS budget for fiscal year 2000 includes \$453,000 for the Food Safety Research Program—the same amount budgeted for the project the previous year.

The President's Food Safety Initiative established a system of enhanced surveillance and monitoring to develop more precise and comprehensive estimates as to the number of cases of foodborne illness, the nature and severity of these illnesses, their underlying causes, and the health outcomes of these illnesses.

ERS plans to use this updated information, along with new and innovative approaches, to measure the benefits of safer food. ERS will work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop national-level estimates of the costs of foodborne illnesses.

This research effort is being coordinated with CDC, the Food Safety and Inspection Service, and the Food and Drug Administration, with the goal of providing economic analysis in support of Federal efforts to reduce the incidence and extent of foodborne disease. Some of this new funding will be used to develop cooperative research agreements with partners in the academic community to apply new techniques (such as contingent valuation and experimental economics) to measure the benefits of improving food safety. ■

### History of ERS Appropriation and FTE Levels



¹FTE=Full-time equivalent.

# Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Funding Renewed

ERS received about \$12.2 million in renewed Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program funding in the fiscal year 2000 budget.

This is the third year that ERS has received FANRP funding.

Food assistance programs account for about 60 percent of the USDA budget and serve about 10 percent of the U.S. population. USDA's largest group of clients are poor Americans who participate in food stamps, WIC, school lunch and school breakfast, and day care homes programs. In FY 1998, Congress assigned the responsibility for research and evaluation of these programs to ERS.

ERS has used this opportunity to develop an extramural research program that is a multidisciplinary partnership with government agencies, academic institutions, and private organizations. This extramural program focuses on three broad areas of research:

**1. Dietary and Nutritional Outcomes**—studies how the programs enhance the access to and choice of palatable, nutritious, and healthy diets.

**2. Food Program Targeting and Delivery**—gauges the success of programs aimed at needy, at-risk population groups and examines program gaps and overlaps; differences between rural and urban delivery; outreach; waste,

fraud and abuse; commodity procurement and distribution; public and private partnerships; and alternative ways to deliver benefits.

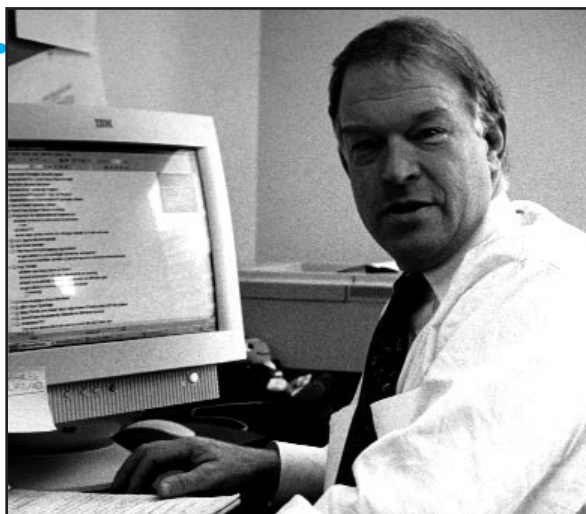
**3. Program Forecasting and Budget Analysis**—focuses on how program needs change with local labor market conditions, economic growth, recession and inflation in food prices and the general economy; and how changing State welfare programs interact with food and nutrition programs.

Additional information on FANRP is available on the ERS website at [www.econ.ag.gov/briefing/foodasst/](http://www.econ.ag.gov/briefing/foodasst/). ■

## Conklin Named Director of Market and Trade Economics Division

Neilson C. Conklin counts among his priorities working with commodity and other farm groups to find out what kind of information they want from ERS and how ERS can get it to them better. Neil returned to ERS in April as director of the Market and Trade Economics Division. Previously, he was Chief Economist at the Farm Credit Council, a trade association representing the Farm Credit System. Neil's work with commodity groups is in line with the ongoing Agricultural Market Information Project, which ERS developed to better understand the "market" for agricultural economics information.

Neil meets informally and frequently with members of Washington-based agricultural associations to exchange information. "I let them know what ERS is working on, and get their reactions and comments," he says. On a more formal basis, Neil and his division have launched a series of quarterly Commodity Roundtables. At these sessions, held at ERS headquarters, ERS staff brief commodity and trade representatives on current research topics and elicit participants' thoughts about issues they feel ERS should address. "Their input provides us with a valuable perspective on the issues facing agriculture," Neil says. The first roundtable, held in July, outlined ERS responses to users' opinions about the commodity outlook program. The second one, on



October 25, included staff briefings on concentration and competition, GMOs, and state trading enterprises.

Neil also is on the lookout for opportunities for ERS staff to speak to farm groups and commodity organizations. These engagements usually consist of an outlook briefing plus a chance for ERS analysts to interact with some of their key clientele. Neil recently briefed the Farmer Mac Board of Directors on the overall agricultural outlook.

When previously with ERS during 1984-88, Neil's assignments included fruit and vegetable outlook and deputy director of the Agriculture and Trade Analysis Division. Neil has also served as Chief of the Agriculture Branch at OMB and on the faculties of Colorado State University, the University of Arizona, and Arizona State University.

Neil received a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics from the University of Minnesota, an M.S. degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Wyoming, and a B.A. in History from Castleton State College in Vermont. ■



# Do Super-Large Grocers Seek Unfair Advantage?

A team of ERS researchers will look into allegations by produce shippers that ongoing reorganization and consolidation in the retailing industry have reduced competition and spawned a number of aggressive trade practices imposed on the shippers. The study will be undertaken in response to a petition sent by several groups of produce shippers to Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman. The shippers specifically asked that the Economic Research Service undertake the study, because of its ability to take "an unbiased look at the issue." The organizations contend that recent mergers and acquisitions in the grocery retailing industry have been accompanied by an increase in retailer charges. The shippers say they find themselves pressured to pay the charges out of fear of losing shelf space and sales for their products in the retail establishment.

The ERS effort is being led by **Mark Denbaly** (with ERS since 1985), Chief of the Food Markets Branch in the Food and Rural Economics Division, and **Barry Krissoff** (with ERS since 1985), Chief of the Specialty Crops Branch in the Market and Trade Economics Division.

They will address at least three questions:

- how are retail industry coordination and consolidation affecting grower, shipper, and consumer welfare?
- how are grower and retail prices changing? and
- how are new marketing practices affecting competitiveness?

The ERS team meets every Tuesday to hash out the specifics of the project. Besides Denbaly and Krissoff, team members include:

- **Linda Calvin**, Specialty Crops Branch; expertise in produce markets, ERS since 1979,
- **Carolyn Dimitri**, Specialty Crops Branch; expertise in industrial organization, joined ERS in 1998,
- **Chuck Handy**, Food Markets Branch; expertise in retailing and wholesaling, ERS since 1969,
- **Mark Jekanowski**, Food Markets Branch; expertise in food away from home, joined ERS in 1998,
- **Phil Kaufman**, Food Markets Branch, expertise in retailing, ERS since 1980.



The ERS Produce Marketing Team assembles to study effects of ongoing reorganization and consolidation in the retailing industry. Standing (left to right) Barry Krissoff, Phil Kaufman, Linda Calvin, and Chuck Handy. Seated (left to right) Mark Jekanowski, Carolyn Dimitri, and Mark Denbaly.

Every one of them was individually chosen for their expertise in specific industries, for the respect they command as researchers, and for their ability to get the job done, say Denbaly and Krissoff. Denbaly and Krissoff have also enlisted the expertise of nearly a dozen experts from academia, in addition to seeking input from the grower-shippers and retailers. From its weekly meetings, the team has targeted three reports it expects to produce by fall 2000, with the first on track for completion by fall 1999.

With the team having two co-leaders and members from two divisions within ERS plus a contingent of cooperators from various universities, coordination is key, says Denbaly. "I've been trying very hard to make sure I speak the same language to the cooperators as to the ERS members. Barry and I know that what we say to our staffs gets interpreted and filtered and passed on to the cooperators, so we try to say the exact same things over and over and to clarify and articulate our goals as precisely and clearly as possible."

University cooperators working on the project include:

- Ed McLaughlin, Cornell University, expertise in produce marketing in retail food stores,
- Roberta Cook-Canela, University of California-Davis, expertise in produce marketing and food distribution,
- Gary Thompson, University of Arizona, expertise in trade and the organic industry,
- Suzanne Thornsby, University of Florida, expertise in trade and food policy,
- Tim Richards, Arizona State University, expertise in empirical tests of market structure and dynamics of price margins,
- Paul Patterson, Arizona State University, expertise in economics of market structure,

- Richard Sexton, University of California-Davis, expertise in industrial organization,
- Mingxia Zhang, University of California-Davis, expertise in industrial organization.

In addition to the difficulties of coordination, the team is encountering some of the difficulties typical of many research projects, like the lack of the right data. “I would like shipper-grower transactions data,” says Denbaly. “Without that information, our research efforts would be much more limited. With it, we can make the links between retailers and shippers, by size, on both ends of the transactions, as well as the types of marketing practices that are used.”

The team is focusing on the marketing practices for six commodities: California head lettuce, bagged salads, California and Florida tomatoes, California table grapes, California oranges, Florida and Texas grapefruit, and California carrots. The commodities were chosen because they constitute a large share of the U.S.-grown produce purchased by consumers.

“We know a lot about farms and the ways they’re organized, their finances, and the crops and livestock they produce. But once [the product] leaves the farm, we don’t know very much about the mechanisms of getting it onto the grocers’ shelves,” says Krissoff. “We know very little about fees that the shippers are talking about. So, one of our first steps is to go out and talk to people to find out what’s going on.”

The groundwork for the study will be based on personal interviews with representatives of national and regional super-market chains and wholesalers, as well as personal interviews with grower-shippers for each commodity. To help out with the interviews, many of which will require traveling to the West Coast, Denbaly and Krissoff will also call on:

- **Lewrene Glaser**, Specialty Crops Branch; expertise in bagged salads; ERS since 1985,
- **Gary Lucier**, Specialty Crops Branch; expertise in tomatoes and lettuce; ERS since 1980,
- **Tom Worth**, Specialty Crops Branch; expertise in market structure and trade; ERS since 1997. ■

## ERS Supplements Its Research Program with Cooperative Agreements

ERS taps into a wide range of expertise and experience beyond the Agency’s walls through the \$2.9 million worth of cooperative agreements awarded in fiscal 1999. Cooperative agreements are not a new idea at ERS. Integrated with the agency’s ongoing research program is an extramural component of cooperative agreements, grants, and research contracts with States, academic institutions, and other research organizations.

“A solid, broad base of research for decisionmakers is paramount at ERS. With the growing need for objective, timely analysis on a host of topics, extramural activities like cooperative agreements have become an important way to leverage the research capacity of ERS,” says Administrator Susan Offutt.

### A Mutual Gain

Federal law allows USDA to award cooperative agreements for the support of research projects to further the Department’s programs, such as Federal food assistance and nutrition programs. These are written agreements with non-Federal parties to cooperate in projects/activities which further the agency’s research and statistical reporting activities. Cooperative agreements are funded through annual Agency appropriations or through reimbursable agreements.

All participants contribute to, and benefit from, the cooperative agreement. Research groups are directly involved in the research, evaluation, and review efforts; and ERS staff are inte-

grated in the development, implementation, and accomplishment of the research projects. This complementary team effort on issues of mutual interest informs and enriches their respective missions.

### Wide Scope & Breadth

Through cooperative agreements, ERS partners with universities and other research institutions in many broad areas of research:

- **Food Assistance and Nutrition:** Understanding Child Nutrition in the Year 2000; Factors Affecting Childhood Obesity Among Low-Income Households; Effects of Welfare Implementation on Food Stamp Caseloads; Risk, Impact, and Assessment of Hunger in Poor, Female-Headed Households with Children; Determinants of Overweight and Obesity Among Low-Income Children; Program Integrity and Improved Service to the Working Poor Under Alternative Reporting Plans; Explaining Changes in Food Stamp Program Caseloads
- University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill; University of Georgia Research Foundation; State University of New York; University of Massachusetts Medical School; Boston Medical Center; SPHERE Institute; Abt Associates

- **Food and Rural Economics:** Rural Data Needs; Modeling Farm Service Agency Guaranteed Loan Claims and Chapter 12 Farmer Bankruptcy Filings Using State-Level Data; A Revised Typology: Recreational Counties in Nonmetropolitan America; Forces Impacting the Social and Economic Well-Being of Individuals, Families, and Communities in the Rural South; Pork Quality and the Role of Market Organization; Retail Price Formation in the Orange Juice Industry; Demand System Analysis for Households Segmented by Family Structure and Income; Federal Credit Programs and Economic Growth
- American Agricultural Economics Association; The Farm Foundation; Loyola University; Mississippi State University–Southern Rural Development Center; North Carolina State University; Purdue University; Texas A&M University–Texas Agricultural Experiment Station System; University of Arkansas; University of Wyoming
- **Markets and Trade:** Rating Revenue/Yield Insurance Contracts; Demand for Organic Agricultural Products and Processed Foods; Growth in the North American Greenhouse Tomato Industry; China’s Livestock Feed Grain Utilization; Economic Performance of Rice Futures Markets; Effects of Biotechnology Across the Marketing Chain for Corn, Cotton, and Soybeans; China’s Water Economy; Measuring Efficiency of Rice Production: South Korea Case Study; Produce Market Structure; Pacific Food Outlook; Farm Program Reforms in NAFTA Countries and the WTO; Structural Changes in Food Demand in Developing Countries: Implications for Trade and Food Security; Econometric Analysis of U.S. and Mexico’s Sweetener Markets; Value of USDA Outlook Information; Implementation of Nursery Insurance Policy; Implication of Trade Liberalization on Trade and Food Security of Developing Countries; Structural Development of Livestock/Poultry Sectors in Central and Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States; Exchange Rates and Agricultural Commodity Prices in Asia and Western Hemisphere Countries; Labeling of GM Foods and Agricultural Trade; Risk Management, Agricultural Policy, and Field Crop Issues; Dynamic Global Analysis of U.S. and World Markets in a More Integrated World; Agricultural Productivity and Efficiency in Russia and Ukraine; Potential for Imports of Mexican Live Cattle; Econometric Modeling of U.S. Soybean, Meal, and Oilseed Sector; Modeling the Marketing Effects of FCIC Subsidies; Agricultural Risk and Insurance; Actuarial Soundness of Various Revenue Insurance Products and Implications for Government Exposure Under the Standard Reinsurance Agreement; Forecast Modeling of Wheat and Corn Trade; Price Variability and Industrial Concentration in U.S. Food Processing; Quantitative Models for the Analysis of Agricultural Trade Liberalization Under the World Trade Organization; Effects of Food Quality; Trade Liberalization and Agricultural Progress Under NAFTA; Methods Used To Represent Non-Normality in Yield Distributions; Project Link; Impacts of GMO’s on the Structure of the Grain Marketing System and Grades and Standards
- Arizona State University, Auburn University, University of California–Davis, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, Data Scape LLC, Henry A. Wallace Institute, International Food Policy Research Institute, Iowa State University, Mississippi State University, New Mexico State University, North Carolina State University, Ohio State University, Oklahoma State University, Oregon State University, Pennsylvania State University, Purdue University, Texas A&M University, University of Arizona, University of Arkansas, University of Florida, University of Georgia, University of Kentucky, University of Massachusetts, University of Minnesota, University of Illinois, University of Toronto, Virginia Polytechnic Institute
- **Resource Economics:** Environmental Regulation Under Trade Liberalization—NAFTA and Pesticide Regulatory Impacts; Economic Valuation of Crop Genetic Resources; Characterizing Production and Management Systems of Successful Small Farms; Agricultural Biotechnology: Incentives in Firm Research and Marketing Decisions and Farmers’ Adoption Decisions; Economic Framework for Provision of Rural Amenities; Agricultural Productivity Data, Methods, and Measures; Measurement of Agricultural Land Input in Economic Accounts; Dynamic Implications of Global Growth in Population, Income, and Technology; National Policy Implications of the Demand for Open Space; An Information System to Support Management of Noninvasive Species; Integrated Model for the Design and Evaluation of Nutrient Management Policies; Agricultural Research, Industry, Structure, and the Life-Science Industry Revolution; User-Friendly System for Understanding, Accessing, and Using the Agricultural Resource Management Phase II (ARMS II) Study; Pesticide Price Differentials Across National Borders; Economic Costs and Responses to Onsite/Offsite Effects of Global Land Degradation; Effect of Accounting for Undesirable Environmental Effects on Farm Income; Labor Allocations and Income Contributions of Women in Farming; Policies for Managing Agricultural Biotechnology and the Environment; Effects of Environmental Regulations on Swine Investment Location; Consequences of Alternative Structural Arrangements on the Farm Sector; Global Trade Analysis Consortium; Impact of Patent Concentration on Innovation in the Plant Biotech Industry; Production and Management Systems of Small Farms; Reservation Prices, Land Conversion, and Carbon Sequestration; Economic Impact of Climate Variability on Agriculture: Input and Output Substitutions
- Arizona University; Auburn University; Farm Foundation; Iowa State University; Kansas State University; Maine University; Michigan State University; National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy; North Carolina State University; Ohio State University; Oregon State University; Pennsylvania; Portland State University; Purdue University; Ridgetown College; Rutgers University; Tennessee State University; University of California–Davis; University of California–Berkeley; University of Florida; University of Maryland; Virginia Polytechnic Institute; Willamette University ■



# ERS Benefits from the Visiting Scholars Program

Two university researchers are currently working in ERS under the agency's ongoing visiting scholars program, and four more are slated to visit over the next year.

ERS's visiting scholars program promotes the exchange of ideas, analytical techniques, and basic data with universities. Under the program, ERS invites university professionals to work in the agency for a semester or more, addressing research issues of interest to the agency. The agency provides office space, equipment, and data access, and in some cases, financial support.

The collaboration between ERS and the universities is an important one, according to Betsey Kuhn, Director of ERS's Food and Rural Economics Division. "It's a head start on building research partnerships for the future," said Kuhn. "This is true especially in areas where ERS may not yet have an established reputation—for example, in the areas of food assistance and diet and health." In addition, the collaboration provides intellectual stimulation and different perspectives for both ERS researchers and visiting researchers. "We all gain," said Kuhn.

The two visiting university scholars currently working in ERS are Dr. George Norton and Dr. Carl Pray.

Norton, professor of agricultural and applied economics at Virginia Tech, has been in the Resource Economics Division (RED) since August and will remain a year. He is evaluating the economic effects of agricultural economics research. Research evaluation and integrated pest management are his primary areas of research at Virginia Tech. Norton said that he will encourage other university faculty to take advantage of the opportunities at ERS. In addition to providing him with an exchange of ideas with other researchers, "this experience gives me an opportunity to conduct research in an area I am interested in without the everyday interruptions of my home institution," he said.

Pray, professor of agriculture, food, and resource economics at Rutgers University, also has been working in RED since August and will remain for a year. He is working on the effects of industry concentration on the rate of innovation in the U.S. plant biotech industry. In addition, he, along with ERS researchers, will be writing a book on private agricultural research and public benefits in the United States and the world. One of the benefits he has found at ERS is the abundance of resources close at hand. "There are more resources across disciplines at a university," he said, "but here at ERS, if I need to talk to, say, a cotton specialist, I can just go to the next floor."

Five more visiting scholars are in the lineup for the next year.

Dr. Gail Cramer will start work in the Market and Trade Economics Division in July 2000. Cramer is L.C. Carter Chair and Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Arkansas. During his 1-year stay, Cramer, along with ERS researchers, will be writing a book on U.S. and global rice economies. Cramer has conducted analysis of U.S. and world rice markets for many years, and has traveled and worked on rice issues extensively in Latin America.

Dr. Willis J. Goudy, Chair of the Department of Sociology at Iowa State University, will begin work in the Food and Rural Economics Division (FRED) during fall 2000. Goudy also holds the special rank of "University Professor," a prestigious ranking above that of full professor granted by the University. He also currently serves as the Acting Director of the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. Goudy has been invited to work on a variety of topics related to population, migration, and rural minorities, to explore State and county data sources of population, employment, earnings, and income that build on his knowledge of rural conditions and trends in Iowa and the North

Central region, and to develop an article for *Rural Development Perspectives* based on his findings.

Dr. Spencer Henson will also work in FRED. Henson is a Lecturer in the Center for Food Economics Research, Department of Agricultural and Food Economics, at The University of Reading, United Kingdom. He will be working on issues related to the performance of food systems in terms of food-related consumer welfare.

Dr. Young Shim is Associate Professor with the Department of Family Resource Studies and Housing at Seowon University in South Korea. She studied U.S. consumers' perceptions about the quality of their diets and completed two papers during a previous stay at ERS.

Dr. Rodney Smith, Associate Professor with the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota, will begin work this winter in RED. Smith is a resource economist who has done analytical policy research concerning, among other policies, the Conservation Reserve Program and Endangered Species Act. While in RED, he will be working with RED researchers to explore linkages between international agricultural trade and environmental quality.

ERS has room for more visiting scholars. Interested university personnel should contact the Director of the Division whose program closely matches their interests:

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## Future Trade Talks

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work has helped ERS economists hone the tools that will provide quantitative assessments of trade liberalization scenarios and issues identified as critical or emerging. These issues range from the role of developing countries in trade agreements to the relationship between these agreements and environmental quality. ERS is also developing an international database to support trade models and inform policymakers.

ERS is disseminating its results through workshops, briefings, and publications, the most recent being *Agriculture in the WTO*. This report has been commended by the Foreign Agricultural Service, the U.S. Trade Representative, and the House Agriculture Committee. It has been excerpted for use in the President's press material to motivate U.S. participation in the new round. And the Washington State Department of Agriculture included 500 copies of the report with press packets for media attending the Seattle Ministerial.

Much of the work (and links to partner organizations) is available online in a briefing room devoted to WTO issues (<http://www.econ.ag.gov/briefing/wto>). The hope is that this information will be accessed by everyone from wheat farmers to ag lobbyists to foreign embassies. ■

## Millie Evano Retires After 37 Years of Service

From the Voice of America to the "voice of OA," Millie Evano has, in her 37 years of government service, witnessed a succession of bosses, addresses, and office technology that would bury lesser workers. To wit:

- Quentin West gave way to Ken Farrell who gave way to J.B. Penn who gave way to John Lee who gave way to Susan Offutt;
- Typewriters, carbon paper, and ditto machines all retired before Millie;
- Computing speed increased exponentially (from Lexitron to Wang to IBM), commuting speed not so much.

Now, in a year that has drawn the curtain on mythical sports careers (Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky, John Elway), Millie joins their ranks and returns to her home State of Pennsylvania. ERS will no longer be as quick to the basket, as tough in the crease, or as deep in the pocket. ■



Millie receives sendoff from Susan Offutt, John Lee, and J.B. Penn.



# ERS Update

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